

CLAIMS

2. A device for introducing state changes in athletic activities which comprises:
 - at least one binary variable, said variable(s) encoding the device states;
 - a time varying value, the current device state, encoded by the binary variable(s);
 - a display; said display presenting the current device state in a form that the athlete may interpret as a change in the athletic environment;
 - a means for setting the device; said means determining the timing and order in which the device transitions between device states, and the average time spent in each device state;
 - a controller; said controller reading the device settings, transitioning between device states in accordance with those settings, and communicating the current device state to the display;
 - an interruptible power source;
 - a durable case; said durable case being appropriate for an athletic activity.
3. A device according to claim 2, wherein the controller utilizes a microprocessor.
4. A device according to claim 2, wherein the display comprises sets of differently colored LEDs.
11. A method for the training of athletes and the playing of athletic games comprising the steps of:

(a) setting the mean frequency of transitions between device states, the minimum hold time and the average time spent in each device state, and the order of the device state transitions;

(b) the device varying its current device state in accordance with those settings;

(c) the device displaying its current device state to the athletes in a form interpretable by them as a change of the environmental state within the context of the current athletic activity.

22. A device according to claim 2, wherein a dial controls the mean frequency of transitions between device states.

23. A device according to claim 2, wherein a dial sets the minimum hold time spent in each device state before a transition is permitted.

24. A device according to claim 2, wherein a switch sets the order of transitions between device states as sequential or random.

25. A device according to claim 2, wherein an occupancy value is set for each device state, said occupancy values determining the average time spent in each device state.

26. A device according to claim 2, wherein the interruptible power source is a removable battery.

27. A device according to claim 2, wherein a switch may interrupt the power.

28. A device according to claim 2, wherein the display comprises sets of LEDs arranged in rings around a conical case.

- 29.** A device according to claim 2, wherein the display comprises sets of differently colored LEDs arranged with each set in a colored ring around a conical case.
- 30.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the order of the device state transitions is random and the timing of the device state transitions is random.
- 31.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the order of the device state transitions is sequential and the timing of the device state transitions is random.
- 32.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the order of the device state transitions is random and the timing of the device state transitions is periodic.
- 33.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the order of the device state transitions is sequential and the timing of the device state transitions is periodic.
- 34.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the athletic activity is a soccer dribbling drill, the device utilizes four device states, and these device states correspond to the environmental states: “do not pass”, “pass on the right”, “pass on the left”, and “pass on either side”.
- 35.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the athletic activity is a basketball drill, the device utilizes four device states, and these device states correspond to the environmental states: “left side layup”, “right side layup”, “shoot from the top of the key”, and “shoot immediately”.
- 36.** A method according to claim 11, wherein the athletic activity is a baseball pitching drill, the device utilizes four device states, and these device states correspond to the

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environmental states: “throw a curve”, “throw a slider”, “throw a fastball”, “throw
out the runner at first base”.